

Outbound steam locomotive, at Hamilton-Wenham station, on main line tracks to Rockport, 1899.

Photo, B. H. Conant,

History of ...

Hamilton's Railroads

The first stretch of the Eastern Railroad, from East Boston to Salem (13 mi.), was completed Aug. 27, 1838. From Monday to Saturday, six trains ran between Salem and Boston. The one-way fare was 50¢.¹

Two years later, on Dec. 18, 1839, Eastern Railroad completed an extension to Ipswich (12 mi.). Next, on Aug. 28, 1840, there was an extension to Newburyport (9 mi.),² that brought the total length from Boston to about 35 miles.

The railroad brought an end to stagecoach travel. At their peak, more than 30 coaches a day ran between Salem and Boston.¹ Trains had more runs than the stagecoaches, offered more space, greater comfort and were cheaper. In 1840, a ticket for a trip from Boston to Beverly cost 56¢; to Ipswich, 87¢; to Newburyport, \$1.25; and to Portsmouth, \$2.¹

With train use steadily increasing, Eastern Railroad, in 1845, reduced the fares: Boston to Lynn, to 25¢; to Salem, 40¢; Beverly 45¢ cents; Newburyport, \$1; and to Portsmouth, \$1.50.¹

In passing through Hamilton, the railroad crossed Main Street, Asbury Street, under a bridge on Cutler

Road and over a bridge above the Black Brook. There was not a stop in either Hamilton or Wenham.

The first reference to Hamilton and Wenham, as an official stop for the railroad, is in the Salem Register of 1856.³

The Eastern Railroad's first depot in Hamilton was at the house of the depot master, Daniel Rust.⁴ It was about where a convenience store is now (178 Bay Rd.). The train crossed Main Street (now Bay Road), just before reaching the station.

Six years later, in September 1862, Eastern Railroad built a new depot near the Wenham town line, and beside Main Street. The 22 x 37 ft., two-story station faced Main Street. On the street level, there was a ticket office, ladies' and gentlemen's bathrooms, a waiting room and a telegraph office; on the second floor, there was a residence for the station agent, Daniel Rust.

A covered platform ran the entire length of the depot lot, which reached close to where the tracks crossed Main Street. A freight storage house, 18 ft. wide and 50 ft. long, was at the south end of the platform and a small storage shed was midway of the freight house.^{2,4}

Soon after the station opened, a major railroad accident occurred in Hamilton. On Sep. 17, 1862, just beyond the Asbury Street crossing and near Cilley's Hill, a train heading to Newburyport crashed head-on into an unscheduled excursion train returning to Boston. The engineers and firemen of both trains were killed; 35 passengers and crew on the excursion train were injured.²

Daniel Rust also died. When told of the accident, he started to run to the scene and dropped dead from a heart attack.¹

At the time, Eastern Railroad did not have a telegraph to monitor and schedule its trains, nor did it have automatic block signals (*introduced in late 1870s*).²

In 1872, Eastern Railroad built a second main line track from Salem to Ipswich. Shortly after, the company extended the second track to Newburyport.⁴

Telegraphers, using Morse code, sent railroad dispatchers the time each train arrived and departed from a station. This allowed changes to be made for scheduled meeting places, when a train was running late. This, along with block signals, provided protection against head-on collisions.⁴

The railroad coming to Hamilton and Wenham created new jobs for locals. To halt traffic on the Main Street and Asbury Street crossings, the railroad built barriers that were manually lowered and raised by a crossing guard. Inside that station, there was a telegrapher. Also in the station, there was a station agent to sell tickets and answer traveler questions.

In 1889, Lester E. Libby, of Hamilton, who was the station agent for 18 years, was credited with developing and issuing the nation's first pocket timetable. The free, small, 8-page booklet, about 2 by 2 in., had advertising to pay for its printing.³ Libby was also the Hamilton Postmaster and he ran a real estate and insurance business.

For loading and unloading traveler baggage, the station had a baggage master. He loaded freight headed toward Boston and transferred freight from trains to the depot's freight storage house.

Other jobs for which locals were hired were: conductors,



Station depot built, in 1862, on the street level, had a ticket office, ladies' and gentlemen's bathrooms, a waiting room and a telegraph office; on second floor, a residence for the station agent. Photo, Photo, B. H. Conant,

engineers, lineman, firemen, section foreman, freight conductor and yard hostler.

In addition to paying riders, trains brought tramps that hid in boxcars. They used the trains to go from place to place. Hamilton had a Tramp Officer responsible for arresting tramps when a train arrived.¹⁸

With the demise of stagecoaches, the post office needed another means for distributing mail. In 1864, the Post Office Department established the Railway Mail Service. Workers in boxcars presorted the mail.

The post office at the tavern on the corner of Bay Path and Farms Road closed and a new post office opened at the Hamilton-Wenham depot, in John Merrill's grocery store.

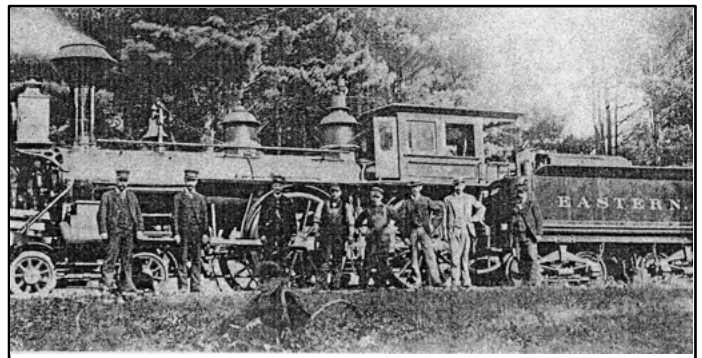


Area east of Wenham-Hamilton Station, seen here in 1891, remained vacant until parking lot was built in 1981. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society.



#2, Nahant, a 4-4-0, built 1860

Photo, Hamilton Historical Society



#37, D. A. Neal, a 4-4-0, built 1866.

Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

Steam Locomotives Until 1950s

Eastern Railroad began with 3 steam-powered locomotives: the Suffolk, Essex and Merrimack. Each weighed about 11 tons.¹ For fuel, they used wood logs and consumed about 100 lb. of wood per mile. About 1870, coal-burning locomotives began replacing the wood-burners. They consumed about 25 lb. of coal per mile. (*R. H. Thurston's A Manual of Steam Boilers, New York, 1896: 1 cord of well-seasoned yellow pine, a ton, equaled 1/2 ton of good coal.*)

A tender that contained wood (*later coal*) and water was directly behind the engine. Most of the tender was a compartment for water, with the wood or coal being in a section at the front.

Early locomotives had several distinguishing characteristics. At the front, just above the tracks, there was a device called a pilot (*commonly known as a cowcatcher*) that deflected obstacles on the track that might derail the locomotive.

The locomotive had a large cylindrical boiler that produced steam to drive the train's wheels.

Projecting above the boiler was a large smoke stack with a conical top, in which there was a spark arrester. Wood-burning locomotives emitted sparks that necessitated a device to keep sparks coming out

of the smokestack. Hot cinders spewed from smoke stacks caused fires alongside the tracks.

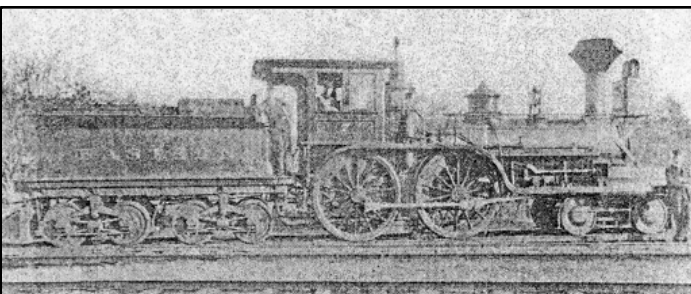
As coal began to replace wood, the arrester was reduced in size to a simple stack that had an inner deflecting cone; with diesel engines, there were no spark arresters.

Their number of wheels classified steam locomotives. Generally, there were three sets of wheels.

At the front, a locomotive had, on each side, two small-diameter leading wheels. Behind them, on each side, there were 2 large-diameter drive wheels. On main-line passenger locomotives, drive wheels had diameters 70 to 100 in. On branch lines, the drive wheel diameters were less. At the back, there were 2 small-diameter trailing wheels.¹

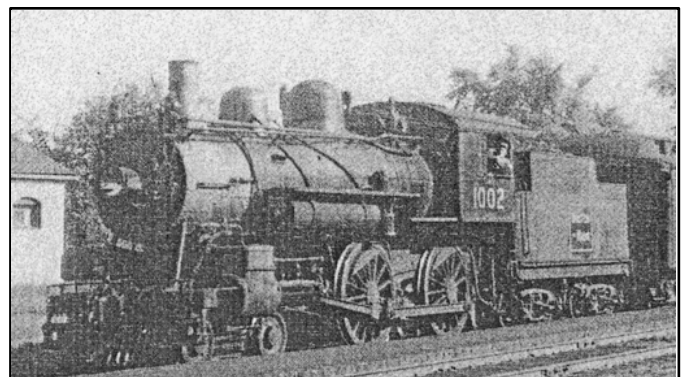
Engines with this configuration were called 2-4-2 apparatus. There were other configurations, including, 2-4-0, 4-2-2, 2-4-4, and 4-4-4. Eastern Railroad used, on its branch lines, in 1871, a coal-burning 4-4-0 locomotive with a slightly flared smoke stack.¹

On the front of the boiler tank, a brass train number hung on a wire across the lens of the headlight. In addition to their number, the early locomotives had names. These included the Essex (1851, #16, 4-4-0); "Merrimack," (*built 1854, #24, 4-4-0, BLW*); "Rockingham," (1837, #82, 2-2-0); Hamlet (1869, #46, 4-4-0); "Naumkeag" (1864, #26, 2-2-0); and Beverly (1854, #24, 4-4-0).¹



#7, Gov. Endicott, a 4-4-0, built 1858

Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

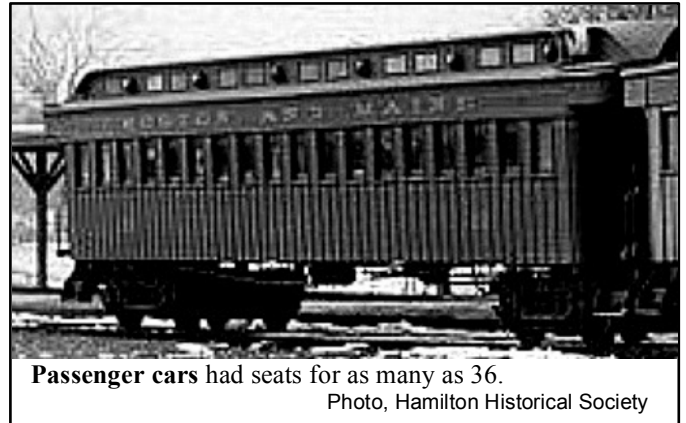


#1002, a 4-4-0, built 1909.

Photo, David Bradslee, 1942



Combination passenger and freight car.
Photo, Hamilton Historical Society



Passenger cars had seats for as many as 36.
Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

The early locomotives had polished bells and whistles. The boilers had shining brass bands. The oil caps and other parts were brightly polished. Tenders and cabs had fancy scroll designs.¹

Generally, in the late 1800s, a branch locomotive pulled only 2 or 3 cars, of which 1 or 2 were passenger cars that had 24 to 30 seats.¹ Main line trains, with a single locomotive, had up to a dozen cars.

Eastern Railroad also had cars that were half freight and half passenger, called a combine. The freight section mainly contained freight and passenger baggage. When pulling a freight car, it would be in front of the passenger cars. Combines most frequently were on branch lines and short main-line runs, where there was not enough traffic to economically justify several single-purpose cars.

Eastern Railroad, in 1861, had 29 locomotives, 47 passenger cars and 13 baggage cars. The freight equipment consisted of 115 long boxcars, 72 standard boxcars, 73 long platform cars, 16 open cattle cars, 84 coal cars, and 52 gravel cars. All the rolling stock was painted yellow.

A decade later, 1871, Eastern Railroad owned 55 locomotives, 98 passenger cars (*which did not include 5 Pullman sleeping cars*), 27 baggage cars, 839 freight cars, of all descriptions.¹

Two Branch Lines

The Asbury Grove Railroad Co. obtained a charter from the State to build a spur from the Hamilton-Wenham depot to the Grove. On Mar. 23, 1870, the Eastern Railroad opened, for the Association, a branch line from the Hamilton-Wenham depot west to the Asbury Grove Methodist campground.¹² Eastern Railroad built the spur in one week.³⁴

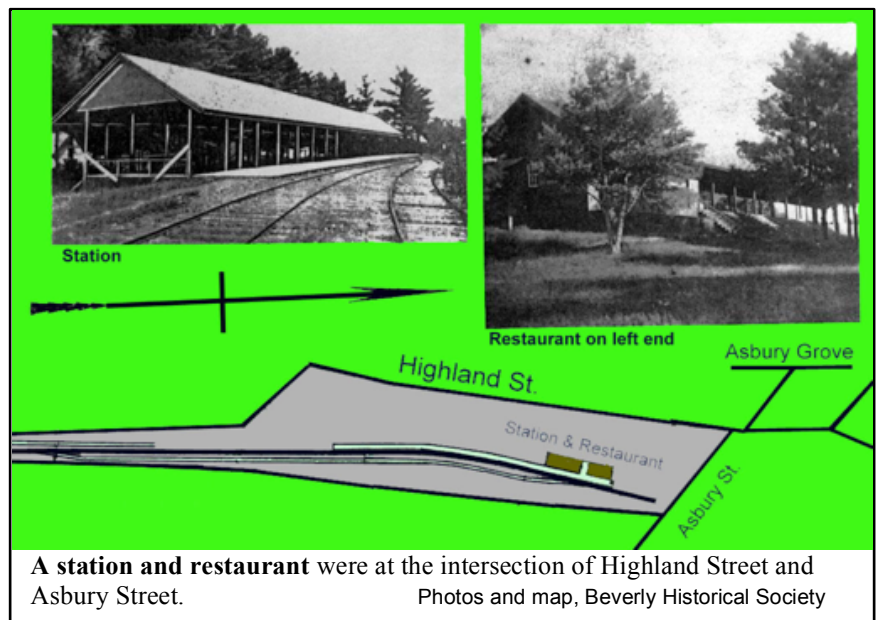
The Grove spur was not directly connected to the main line. People traveling between the Grove and the station had to

switch trains.⁶ At the Grove, the Association built a depot, painted red, at the corner of Highland and Asbury streets.^{7, 6} The branch eliminated the street-traffic of the many wagons going back and forth from the depot to the Grove.

Getting to the Grove became much easier in 1884. At the request of the Association, the Eastern Railroad connected its main line to the track from the depot station to the Grove.⁸ Often serving the Grove was the 4-4-0 locomotive D. A. Neal, #37.⁴

The connection between the Asbury branch and the main line was about where the original train station was located. From there, it crossed over Willow Street and ran on a straight line to Highland Street.

Through an agreement with the railroad and the Association, campers bought tickets at half the normal rates.⁹ Trains left Boston's Haymarket Square station for the 23-mile trip to the Wenham/Hamilton station (*It became Hamilton-Wenham Station in 1905*¹). There were about 30 stops from Boston to Hamilton.² At the height of the summer, 11 trains a day arrived at the Grove from Boston.⁵



A station and restaurant were at the intersection of Highland Street and Asbury Street.
Photos and map, Beverly Historical Society



In Hamilton, Essex Branch had stations (*) at Bridge Street and Woodbury Street. Map, J. Hauck, 2018

A second branch line, from the Hamilton-Wenham depot, was built in May 1872. The town of Essex owned the 5.9 mi. branch, built and operated by the Eastern Railroad.¹ It connected with the main line in Wenham, just before the Hamilton town line.

At the Hamilton-Wenham depot, the Essex Branch had two spurs that extended into Wenham, one spur connected to a 70-ft. diameter turntable; on the other spur the railroad parked passenger and freight cars. In addition, a windmill-powered water tower, two freight houses, a 2-stall engine house and an equipment shed were beside the Essex Branch line, at the depot in Hamilton.⁴

From the Hamilton-Wenham depot, the single-track Essex branch left the double-track main line and crossed over Walnut Street and went through the Myopia Hunt Club property, then along what is now Pilgrim Road to the Miles River station, the first from the Hamilton depot. Next, the track crossed Bridge Street (*near what is now 53 Bridge St.*), a flag crossing, and then over a bridge above the Miles River, at which point it ran parallel to Bridge Street, about a third of a mile. On this stretch, there were 4 farm crossings.³⁹ Next, the track again crossed Bridge Street, just past the Woodbury intersection, where there was a small station. From here, the track went through a wooded area, before crossing School Street, at what is now 58 School St., for about a third of a mile. It crossed Essex Street, at about 409 Essex St. and, then went a short distance, before crossing Lake Road (*now Forest Street*). It passed beside the Drivers Union icehouse in Hamilton, which had a siding, next across Echo Cove Road and, then, over the Essex/Hamilton town line.

At the Highland Street end on the Asbury branch there was a long siding that allowed two trains to be at the station at the same time. This arrangement was used when large crowds required more than a single train could transport.

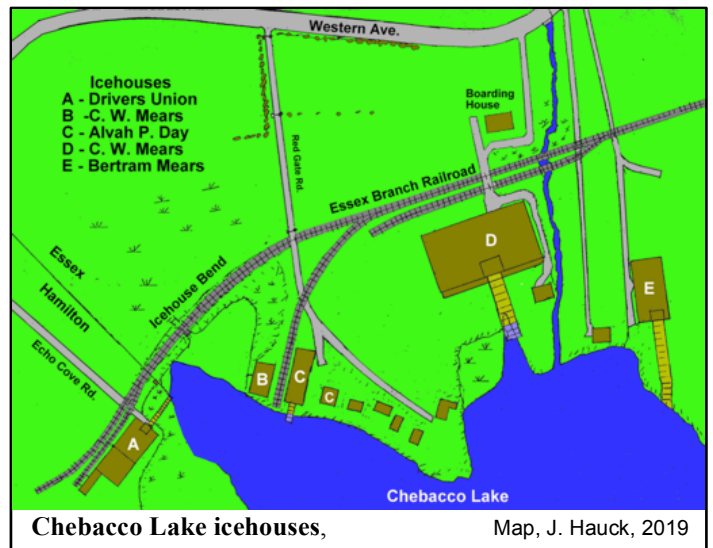
On Jun. 21, 1874, the company, for the first time in its history, began running Sunday passenger trains, two each way between Boston and Salem.¹ The Asbury Grove Campground Association, for many years, did not approve of travel on the Sabbath.

Eastern Railroad also had a siding just after the branch cut off from the main line. It ran somewhat parallel to the main line, not crossing Willow Street. It brought coal and building materials to a hardware and supplies store, on Willow Street.

In 1885, a transportation challenge to the railroad's Asbury Grove service began. The Naumkeag Street Railway built a rail line for its horse-drawn streetcars.¹²² The streetcars went from the depot down Railroad Ave., along Willow Street, down Asbury Street ending at a station close to the Grove's entrance. The tracks extended to within 10 ft. of the entrance.



Miles River/Bridge Street Station was first stop out of Hamilton-Wenham Station on the Essex Branch. Photo, Dana Story, 1936.



Chebacco Lake icehouses, Map, J. Hauck, 2019

south end of the lake, in Hamilton. John Whipple, of Boylston, built Chebacco House in 1859.²

A story goes that when the train neared the rise by the north end of the lake, at the icehouse bend, it could be seen at the Chebacco House and the number of cars counted. This allowed the hotel kitchen staff to figure how much food to prepare for guests arriving by the train.¹¹

Regular branch service was by the 4-4-0 locomotives. The very long picnic trains, as many as 12 cars, used more powerful locomotives, the 2-6-0, 1300 series, including number 1368.¹² They were called Mogs because they had more power than a 4-4-0.

The primary function of the Essex branch was transporting ice from winter harvests stored at the icehouses on Chebacco Lake. Shipments to Boston began in late spring.

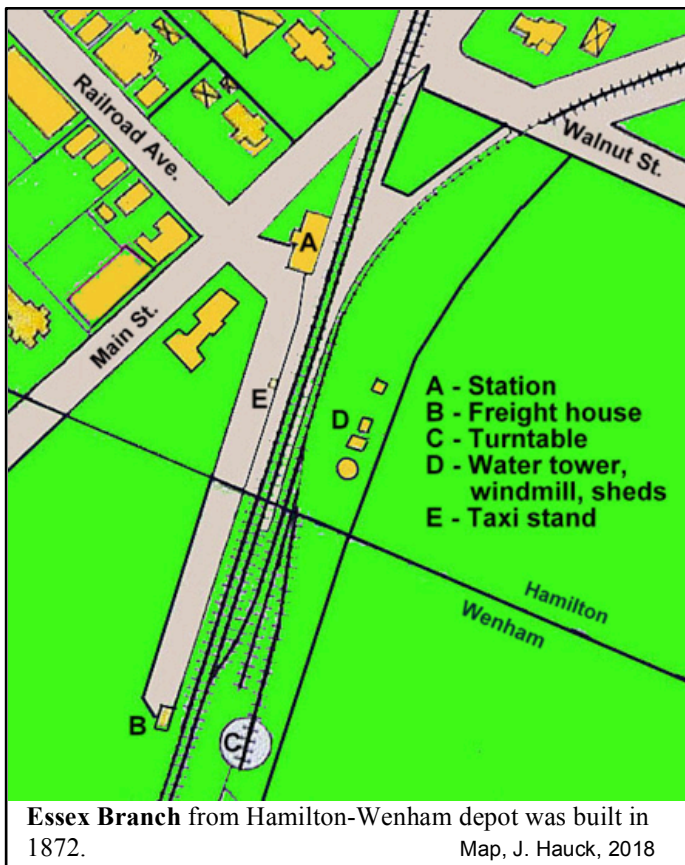
The Boston & Maine Railroad built spurs from the Essex branch near the north end of the lake. One spur ran alongside the Drivers Union icehouses. The C.W. Mears icehouse also had a rail siding. The Bertram-Mears icehouse did not have a rail siding. Its ice was carted to the siding by the Mears warehouses.

The boxcars could hold 40 to 50 tons of ice. The ice cars had double walls with sawdust and straw insulation. When many ice-filled cars were joined, a second engine either in front or pushing from behind was used. In 1925, the Charles Mears house shipped 463 carloads of ice.¹¹

The trains also hauled timber to Chebacco Lake for building ship hulls. Nearly 15 million feet came on the railroad. From the lake, the hulls were brought on carts to Essex harbor for final construction. During the time of the railroads served Essex about 1,000 wooden ships were built.^{11, 12}

The branch trains also grain for farmers and coal for heating.

Outbound, the branch trains carried barrels of clams from the Essex River clam flats, shoes from a South Essex shoe factory, wooden boxes from a box



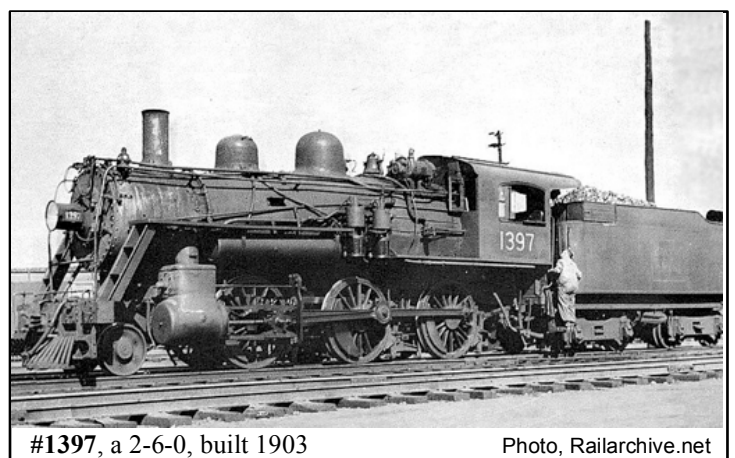
Just beyond the town line, there was a long curve on a high embankment next to a cove on the lake. Known as icehouse bend, it was near four more large icehouses. There were two more sidings here.¹²

Daily passenger service on the Essex branch from the Hamilton-Wenham depot was four trips "down the line," toward Essex, and four return trips "up the line," toward the Hamilton-Wenham station. In Hamilton, there were passenger stops at the Miles River crossing and the Woodbury Street crossing. In 1898, east Hamilton school children rode the branch line to attend the Center School on Railroad Avenue. Scholars' tickets on the railroad cost about 6¢ a day for each pupil. Previously used horse-drawn wagons cost 25 or 50¢ a day, for each scholar.¹⁷

In Essex, stops were at Centennial Grove, near the north end of Chebacco Lake, Essex Falls, Essex and Conomo.¹¹ Originally, all the stations on the branch had agents.¹²

Hundreds of people, from as far as Boston, came by train to attend summer events at Centennial Grove. There were weeks when as many 20 cars went to the Grove. One picnic, sponsored by the Grove, was so large that it needed two trips that brought 42 passenger cars.¹¹

The Centennial Grove stop, in Essex, was a drop-off and pickup point for people going to the very popular Chebacco House hotel and restaurant, at the



factory, sand from the west Gloucester beach to the General Electric foundries in Lynn.¹²

Eastern Railroad bought the Essex branch from the town of Essex, in 1874, for \$95,000.^{11, 12}

On Dec. 23 1883, the Boston and Maine Railroad (B&MRR) began leasing the Eastern Railroad's main line, branches and leased roads. B&MRR bought Eastern Railroad on May 9, 1890.⁴

As the end of the 20th century neared, street railroads began to challenge railroad service on both of Eastern's branch lines.

Grove Branch Ended

Railroad service to the Grove ended in 1901.

Not all the people arriving by train at Hamilton were paying customers. Empty freight cars headed to the ice companies at Chebacco Lake often brought tramps to the town. Their number was large enough for the town to create a budget for their feeding and boarding and a definition of who were tramps: Any person "riding upon a freight train of a railroad, whether within or without any car or part thereof, without a permit from the proper officers or employees of such railroad or train, shall be prime facie evidence that such a person is a tramp."¹⁸

Being near the town line, the depot, since its start, had signs alternating in town precedence, i.e., Wenham-Hamilton and Hamilton-Wenham. In 1888, the railroad rejected a Hamilton petition to change the depot's name to Hamilton Junction. "Hamilton & Wenham" became the permanent name in 1905.²

However, train station announcements continued to alternate between the two names. In a 1908 Boston Advertiser newspaper article, an article told a tale of the well-known author Gail Hamilton (*a pen name for Mary Abigail Dodge*) scolding the ticket seller at

the Salem depot for giving precedence to Wenham over her native town in announcing cars ready for "Wenham and Hamilton." Later, on another day when he called out, "Hamilton and Wenham," she sent him a basket of flowers, with her card inscribed, "In commemoration of the victory of a man's conscience over his stubborn will."²

Ridership on the Boston and Maine Railroad grew in 1905 when the railroad sold tickets at half-price to people going to the Grove.⁹ Trains left Boston's Haymarket Square station for the 23-mi. trip to the Wenham/Hamilton station, with connection to the Grove on the 1.1-mi. branch line. The reduced ticket price may have been due to a steady rise in the ownership of automobiles in the early 1900s and a decline in railroad riders.

The railroad was important to fighting the major downtown fire on Mar. 25, 1910. Salem sent an engine on a special railroad flatcar.² when the train arrived at the depot, it ran over fire hoses stretched across the tracks, cutting the hoses that were carrying water to firemen fighting the fire.⁷

Embers, carried by strong winds, set fire to and destroyed icehouses alongside Chebacco Lake and burned a path 2 miles long through the woods. The loss of the icehouses resulted in a drastic reduction in the use of the railroad for ice shipments.^{10, 11}

The need for water to fight fires, in the business district, led Hamilton, in 1929, to build a water line and hydrants on Railroad Avenue. The B&MRR allowed Hamilton to connect the new lines to its water tank at the depot. The elevated tank provided pressurized water for hydrants on the street.¹

The B&MRR, in 1935, refurbished the 50,000-gal. depot water tank and, gave it to the town. The elevated tank supplied pressurized water to more than a

mile of water mains on Railroad Ave., Union St., Main St., Walnut Rd. and Pine St.¹⁹

The B&MRR, in the 1930s, began replacing its steam-powered locomotives with diesel-powered locomotives that were more fuel-efficient and did not stop frequently to resupply coal and water. They burned oil to power a generator powering electric motors on the wheels.



Looking north, at Hamilton-Wenham station, 1894: left to right, main line, siding and locomotive on Essex branch. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

The Essex branch ceased operation on Dec. 21, 1942. It had been in service for 70 years. Not only were the locomotives, boxcars and passenger cars gone, but also in just a week's time the tracks were removed. They became war scrap.¹¹

The last scheduled train, pulled by 4-4-0 number 923, arrived in Boston at 5:50 p.m., on Saturday, Dec. 19, 1942. It immediately returned to Salem.¹²

A year later, 1943, B&MRR removed the 70-ft. diameter turntable. Remaining were the water tower, two freight houses and an equipment shed.¹²

In 1945, the B&MRR made the Hamilton-Wenham depot a turn-back point for some of its trains.³⁵

The station agent, at the Hamilton-Wenham depot, from 1919 to 1945 was Avon D. Bradeen. He died Jul. 27, 1945. He was active on many town committees and had been a selectman in 1919, 1920 and 1922.²⁰

Following WWII, financial burdens threatened to close many of public transportation services, in the greater Boston region that were independently owned and operated, such as the Eastern Railroad. However. In 1947, the state formed the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to combine many of the transport operations into a single state-run agency, subsidizing the private operations, including the B&MRR.

As part of its efforts to reduce operating costs, the B&MRR, in 1947, announced a plan to replace the manually operated safety gates, at the two Hamilton crossings, with electrical devices. The selectmen strongly opposed the changes and they were strongly supported at the annual town meeting.²¹

Three years later, 1950, the railroad installed flashing lights on the gates.²² Gone were: the gates on both sides of the track that a crossing guard cranked up and down; the gate guard; and the small gatehouse near the crossing. Also gone was the joy some young people had in helping to lower the gates and light the lanterns hanging from the gates.²⁰

The B&MRR lost a source of income in 1957, when the Post Office Dept. stopped using the railroad for transporting mail. Thus ended 113 years of mail service.⁴⁰

Remaining with the railroad was the daily delivery of Boston newspapers, in the morning and afternoon. Bundles of

the papers were dropped from the combo car, at the station, where they were carted to a newspaper store on Railroad Avenue.

By the 1950s, the B&MRR Newburyport line basically had been reduced to a Boston commuter service. In 1950, the population was about 2,800; however, in 1960 it had doubled to about 5,500.

Hamilton, on Jan. 7, 1960, took possession, by eminent domain, of the 14,900 sq. ft. depot property and its buildings that were in poor condition. Town officials believed Hamilton would probably have to provide a station and parking facilities, on the property, if some form of commuter transportation was to continue.²³

The B&MRR, in 1961, sold the large freight storage house and property to the Dodge Tree Service Co., which moved the 75 ft. x 20 ft. building north beside the track behind a cinder-block garage. Placed on a basement foundation, it was refurbished to be private residence for Donald Costin, co-owner of the tree company.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), in 1964, began to subsidize the B&MRR service through Hamilton.³⁷

On Jan. 18, 1965, the Hamilton-Wenham station became the terminus for 21 B&MRR round trips to Boston. After 1967, the only service beyond was a single daily Newburyport round trip, subsidized by Newburyport and Rowley. It ended in April 1976.³⁷

Hamilton voters, in November 1968, were asked to decide on continuing to have train service to Boston. While withdrawal would have halted train service; the town would have remained responsible for its share of MBTA costs. The vote was 2,320 yeas to 430 nays to retain train service and remain in MBTA.²⁴



Elevated platform, at Hamilton-Wenham station. Brick building at back originally was a wooden freight house on east side of tracks. Photo, J. Hauck, 2019

Even with the MBTA subsidizing its operation, the B&MRR went bankrupt in 1970. In 1976, the company sold the rights of way, in the commuter zone, to the MBTA. In 1983, Guilford Transportation Industries bought the B&MRR. By contract with the MBTA, the B&MRR operated freight and commuter service to and from Boston.¹⁴

In 1978, the MBTA informed Hamilton about its plan to abandon regularly scheduled trips of the Ipswich Branch during the commuter hours.²⁵ The selectmen vigorously objected. There were about 50 residents commuting daily to and from Boston. The town voted, in 1980, to remain part of the MBTA.³⁰

About 1975, the former small freight holding building that was alongside the station platform in became a taxi stand. It replaced a taxi stand that had been on the north side of the train station.

Freight service to Newburyport lasted until 1984, and the line was formally abandoned in 1994, even as preparations began for restored service. After a brief period of abandonment, Newburyport commuter rail service resumed on Oct. 26, 1998, with an infill stop at Rowley.³⁶

A halt to commuter service happened in 1984, but not because the MBTA halted its operations. In November, fire destroyed the wooden railroad bridge connecting Beverly and Salem. Full service, over a new bridge, was restored a year later, on Dec. 1, 1985.¹³

Daily boardings for Boston, at the Hamilton-Wenham station, first exceeded 200 in 1990: 205 boardings. Just four years later, 1994, boardings were 306, and in another two years they were 378. In 1998, there were 449 boardings.¹⁵

New Station in 2002

Commuter service was seriously affected in 2000, when a fire destroyed the former baggage building/waiting room and the platform.

It was not until 2002, that the MBTA built a 700-ft. long platform on the east side of the tracks. Beginning just past the Wenham town line, the platform eliminated a previous problem of trains blocking Bay Road, when they stopped at the station. The MBTA also built, at the north end of the platform, a high-level platform for handicapped accessibility to passenger cars. Adjacent to the platform, the MBTA built a 194-car commuter parking area.

The Federal Railroad Authority, in 2004, made a law requiring the sounding of a locomotive horn when a train nears and enters a public road crossing. The Massachusetts legislature, at Hamilton's for Quiet Zones, exempted the railroad crossings in the town from the trains warning sounds. Lighted warning devices were built at the two crossings.²⁹

The MBTA, in 2010, began replacing many of its older commuter locomotives. It had been more than two decades since the MBTA acquired new locomotives. The new locomotives replaced the oldest and least reliable units in the fleet. The two new locomotives burn less fuel and emit lower levels of nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons.³¹

Between 2003 and 2013, the MBTA's average fare more than doubled, an increase of nearly 130%.³³ (*The Hamilton-Wenham fare to Boston was \$8.10.*) A year later, there was another increase of about 5%. (*The Hamilton-Wenham fare to Boston was \$8.50.*) Daily Boston-bound boardings decreased, that year to 436, down 11% from 2002.¹⁵ (*In 2018, the Hamilton-Wenham fare to Boston was \$9.25.*)



#2021, diesel electric, 2018,

Photo, Wikimedia commons



Bi-level passenger car, 2019,

Photo, J. Hauck



About 1975, former freight holding building became a taxi stand, replacing stand that was on north side of the station.
Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

In 2013, the MBTA added bi-level coaches, with seating for about 175 passengers.³²

For a replacement of the Salem-Beverly bridge, the MBTA, in 2017, shutdown service for 28 days,

from Jul. 17 to Aug. 13. On the weekends from Jul. 8 to Sep. 30, there was no service for installation of train control systems. During the week, there was free shuttle bus service to Salem.

In 2017, the MBTA purchased two diesel-electric locomotives. A diesel engine drives an alternator that produces electricity to run electric motors mounted on the axles. Locomotives can be coupled together and run by one engineer from the lead unit.³¹

The MBTA fleet, in 2018, had: 80 locomotives up to 30 years old, 410 coaches, including 140 bi-level and 270 standard coaches.³⁹

At the Hamilton-Wenham station, in 2018, the Newbury/Rockport line, from Monday to Friday, had 17 trains to Boston: first at 5:37 a.m., last at 11:20 p.m.; on Saturday and Sunday, there were 6 trains to Boston: the first at 9:12 a.m. and the last at 9:20 p.m.

Jack Hauck, May, 2019

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